

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, IT, PO

SUBJECT: CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS WITHDRAW OBSERVERS FROM
COMMUNIST PARTY CONGRESS

1. CITING THE DECISION OF THE PORTUGUESE MILITARY AUTHORITIES TO BAN FROM THE FORTHCOMING ELECTIONS THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY, THE ITALIAN CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY ANNOUNCED ON THE EVENING OF MARCH 18 THAT ITS OBSERVER DELEGATION WOULD NO LONGER ATTEND THE SESSIONS OF THE 14TH CONGRESS OF THE ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY (PCI) SCHEDULED TO RUN FROM MARCH 18 THROUGH 23. AT THE MIDWAY POINT OF THE MORNING SESSION ON MARCH 19, THE PRESIDING OFFICER OF THE CONGRESS MADE A FORMAL ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC ACTION COUPLED WITH A CAREFULLY WORDED STATEMENT DEPLORING THE MOVE AS NOT IN THE INTERESTS OF PROMOTING A DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE ITALIAN DEMOCRATIC FORCES.

2. COMMENT: THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY DECISION CAST A PALL OVER THE MARCH 19 MORNING PROCEEDINGS OF THE PCI CONGRESS. THE ANNOUNCEMENT WAS MET WITH A STUNNED SILENCE WHICH WAS BROKEN BY RELATIVELY UNENTHUSIASTIC APPLAUSE FOLLOWING THE READING OF THE PCI'S STATEMENT. IN HIS LENGTHY OPENING SPEECH TO THE CONGRESS, BERLINGUER CLEARLY SINGLED
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THE EMBARRASSMENT WHICH EVENTS IN PORTUGAL POSE FOR THE PCI

DOMESTICALLY. NOTING THAT THERE IS UNDER WAY IN PORTUGAL
"A RATHER DIFFICULT POLITICAL PROCESS" WHICH ONE MUST ATTEMPT
TO UNDERSTAND, BERLINGUER CAUTIOUSLY OBSERVED THAT "IT IS CLEAR
THAT CONDITIONS IN ITALY ARE TOTALLY DIVERSE FROM THOSE OF
PORTUGAL."VOLPE

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